

Thursday, August 15

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Nehemiah 9:22 - 10:39

9 22 “Then you helped our ancestors conquer kingdoms and nations, and you placed your people in every corner of the land. They took over the land of King Sihon of Heshbon and the land of King Og of Bashan. **23** You made their descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and brought them into the land you had promised to their ancestors. **24** “They went in and took possession of the land. You subdued whole nations before them. Even the Canaanites, who inhabited the land, were powerless! Your people could deal with these nations and their kings as they pleased. **25** Our ancestors captured fortified cities and fertile land. They took over houses full of good things, with cisterns already dug and vineyards and olive groves and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate until they were full and grew fat and enjoyed themselves in all your blessings. **26** “But despite all this, they were disobedient and rebelled against you. They turned their backs on your Law, they killed your prophets who warned them to return to you, and they committed terrible blasphemies. **27** So you handed them over to their enemies, who made them suffer. But in their time of trouble they cried to you, and you heard them from heaven. In your great mercy, you sent them liberators who rescued them from their enemies. **28** “But as soon as they were at peace, your people again committed evil in your sight, and once more you let their enemies conquer them. Yet whenever your people turned and cried to you again for help, you listened once more from heaven. In your wonderful mercy, you rescued them many times! **29** “You warned them to return to your Law, but they became proud and obstinate and disobeyed your commands. They did not follow your regulations, by which people will find life if only they obey. They stubbornly turned their backs on you and refused to listen. **30** In your love, you were patient with them for many years. You sent your Spirit, who warned them through the prophets. But still they wouldn’t listen! So once again you allowed the peoples of the land to conquer them. **31** But in your great mercy, you did not destroy them completely or abandon them forever. What a gracious and merciful God you are! **32** “And now, our God, the great and mighty and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of unending love, do not let all the hardships we have suffered seem insignificant to you. Great trouble has come upon us and upon our kings and leaders and priests and prophets and ancestors—all of your people—from the days when the kings of Assyria first triumphed over us until now. **33** Every time you punished us you were being just. We have sinned greatly, and you gave us only what we deserved. **34** Our kings, leaders, priests, and ancestors did not obey your Law or listen to the warnings in your

commands and laws. **35** Even while they had their own kingdom, they did not serve you, though you showered your goodness on them. You gave them a large, fertile land, but they refused to turn from their wickedness. **36** “So now today we are slaves in the land of plenty that you gave our ancestors for their enjoyment! We are slaves here in this good land. **37** The lush produce of this land piles up in the hands of the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They have power over us and our livestock. We serve them at their pleasure, and we are in great misery.” **38** The people responded, “In view of all this, we are making a solemn promise and putting it in writing. On this sealed document are the names of our leaders and Levites and priests.”

10 **1** The document was ratified and sealed with the following names: The governor: Nehemiah son of Hacaliah, and also Zedekiah. **2** The following priests: Seraiah, Azariah, Jeremiah, **3** Pashhur, Amariah, Malkijah, **4** Hattush, Shebaniah, Malluch, **5** Harim, Meremoth, Obadiah, **6** Daniel, Ginnethon, Baruch, **7** Meshullam, Abijah, Mijamin, **8** Maaziah, Bilgai, and Shemaiah. These were the priests. **9** The following Levites: Jeshua son of Azaniah, Binnui from the family of Henadad, Kadmiel, **10** and their fellow Levites: Shebaniah, Hodiah, Kelita, Pelaiah, Hanan, **11** Mica, Rehob, Hashabiah, **12** Zaccur, Sherebiah, Shebaniah, **13** Hodiah, Bani, and Beninu. **14** The following leaders: Parosh, Pahath-moab, Elam, Zattu, Bani, **15** Bunni, Azgad, Bebai, **16** Adonijah, Bigvai, Adin, **17** Ater, Hezekiah, Azzur, **18** Hodiah, Hashum, Bezai, **19** Hariph, Anathoth, Nebai, **20** Magpiash, Meshullam, Hezir, **21** Meshezabel, Zadok, Jaddua, **22** Pelatiah, Hanan, Anaiah, **23** Hoshea, Hananiah, Hasshub, **24** Hallohesh, Pilha, Shobek, **25** Rehum, Hashabnah, Maaseiah, **26** Ahiah, Hanan, Anan, **27** Malluch, Harim, and Baanah. **28** Then the rest of the people—the priests, Levites, gatekeepers, singers, Temple servants, and all who had separated themselves from the pagan people of the land in order to obey the Law of God, together with their wives, sons, daughters, and all who were old enough to understand— **29** joined their leaders and bound themselves with an oath. They swore a curse on themselves if they failed to obey the Law of God as issued by his servant Moses. They solemnly promised to carefully follow all the commands, regulations, and decrees of the LORD our Lord: **30** “We promise not to let our daughters marry the pagan people of the land, and not to let our sons marry their daughters. **31** “We also promise that if the people of the land should bring any merchandise or grain to be sold on the Sabbath or on any other holy day, we will refuse to buy it. Every seventh year we will let our land rest, and we will cancel all debts owed to us. **32** “In addition, we promise to obey the command to pay the annual Temple tax of one-eighth of an ounce of silver for the care of the Temple of our God. **33** This will provide for the Bread of the Presence; for the regular grain offerings and burnt offerings; for the offerings on the Sabbaths, the new moon celebrations, and the annual festivals; for the holy offerings; and for

the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel. It will provide for everything necessary for the work of the Temple of our God. **34** “We have cast sacred lots to determine when—at regular times each year—the families of the priests, Levites, and the common people should bring wood to God’s Temple to be burned on the altar of the LORD our God, as is written in the Law. **35** “We promise to bring the first part of every harvest to the LORD’s Temple year after year—whether it be a crop from the soil or from our fruit trees. **36** We agree to give God our oldest sons and the firstborn of all our herds and flocks, as prescribed in the Law. We will present them to the priests who minister in the Temple of our God. **37** We will store the produce in the storerooms of the Temple of our God. We will bring the best of our flour and other grain offerings, the best of our fruit, and the best of our new wine and olive oil. And we promise to bring to the Levites a tenth of everything our land produces, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our rural towns. **38** “A priest—a descendant of Aaron—will be with the Levites as they receive these tithes. And a tenth of all that is collected as tithes will be delivered by the Levites to the Temple of our God and placed in the storerooms. **39** The people and the Levites must bring these offerings of grain, new wine, and olive oil to the storerooms and place them in the sacred containers near the ministering priests, the gatekeepers, and the singers. “We promise together not to neglect the Temple of our God.”

1 Corinthians 9:19 - 10:13

9 19 Even though I am a free man with no master, I have become a slave to all people to bring many to Christ. **20** When I was with the Jews, I lived like a Jew to bring the Jews to Christ. When I was with those who follow the Jewish law, I too lived under that law. Even though I am not subject to the law, I did this so I could bring to Christ those who are under the law. **21** When I am with the Gentiles who do not follow the Jewish law, I too live apart from that law so I can bring them to Christ. But I do not ignore the law of God; I obey the law of Christ. **22** When I am with those who are weak, I share their weakness, for I want to bring the weak to Christ. Yes, I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. **23** I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings. **24** Don’t you realize that in a race everyone runs, but only one person gets the prize? So run to win! **25** All athletes are disciplined in their training. They do it to win a prize that will fade away, but we do it for an eternal prize. **26** So I run with purpose in every step. I am not just shadowboxing. **27** I discipline my body like an athlete, training it to do what it should. Otherwise, I fear that after preaching to others I myself might be disqualified.

10 **1** I don't want you to forget, dear brothers and sisters, about our ancestors in the wilderness long ago. All of them were guided by a cloud that moved ahead of them, and all of them walked through the sea on dry ground. **2** In the cloud and in the sea, all of them were baptized as followers of Moses. **3** All of them ate the same spiritual food, **4** and all of them drank the same spiritual water. For they drank from the spiritual rock that traveled with them, and that rock was Christ. **5** Yet God was not pleased with most of them, and their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. **6** These things happened as a warning to us, so that we would not crave evil things as they did, **7** or worship idols as some of them did. As the Scriptures say, "The people celebrated with feasting and drinking, and they indulged in pagan revelry." **8** And we must not engage in sexual immorality as some of them did, causing 23,000 of them to die in one day. **9** Nor should we put Christ to the test, as some of them did and then died from snakebites. **10** And don't grumble as some of them did, and then were destroyed by the angel of death. **11** These things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who live at the end of the age. **12** If you think you are standing strong, be careful not to fall. **13** The temptations in your life are no different from what others experience. And God is faithful. He will not allow the temptation to be more than you can stand. When you are tempted, he will show you a way out so that you can endure.

Psalm 34:1 - 10

34 **1** I will praise the LORD at all times. I will constantly speak his praises. **2** I will boast only in the LORD ; let all who are helpless take heart. **3** Come, let us tell of the LORD 's greatness; let us exalt his name together. **4** I prayed to the LORD, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. **5** Those who look to him for help will be radiant with joy; no shadow of shame will darken their faces. **6** In my desperation I prayed, and the LORD listened; he saved me from all my troubles. **7** For the angel of the LORD is a guard; he surrounds and defends all who fear him. **8** Taste and see that the LORD is good. Oh, the joys of those who take refuge in him! **9** Fear the LORD, you his godly people, for those who fear him will have all they need. **10** Even strong young lions sometimes go hungry, but those who trust in the LORD will lack no good thing.

Proverbs 21:13

21 13 Those who shut their ears to the cries of the poor will be ignored in their own time of need.